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PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN

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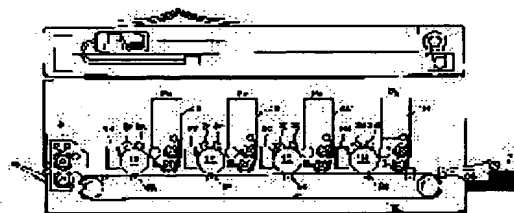
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(72)Inventor : INOUE AKIRA
WAKI KENICHIRO
SUZUKI HIROYUKI
ITO MASAHIRO

(54) IMAGE FORMING DEVICE**(57)Abstract:**

PURPOSE: To provide an image forming device constituted so that color mixture generated in the cleanerless system image forming device and caused by a retransfer action is prevented from occurring and an image whose color tone is not changed can be maintained.

CONSTITUTION: The image forming device is provided with a developing means 4 forming a toner image by forming a latent image on a uniformly electrostatically charged image carrier 1 and developing it by developer which is carried by a developer carrier and which includes spherical toner and carrier and plural image forming units P used also as a cleaning means recovering residual toner particulates left on the carrier 1 after the toner image is transferred on a transfer material by the developing means 4 in a line along a carrying belt 10 and constituted so as to form the image by carrying the transfer material by the belt 10 and passing it through an image forming part. Then, the proportion of an area covered with additive added to the toner particulates is set to be $\geq 15\%$ with respect to the surface area of one toner particulate.

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CLAIMS

[Claim(s)]

[Claim 1] It has a development means to form a latent image in homogeneity at image support by which electrification processing was carried out, and to develop this latent image and to form a toner image with a developer containing a globular form toner supported by developer support and a carrier. An image formation unit which serves also as a cleaning means to collect ** toner particles which remained to this image support after this development means imprints this toner image to imprint material In image formation equipment which is installed successively along with a conveyance belt, conveys imprint material by this conveyance belt, is made to pass said image formation unit, and forms an image [two or more] Image formation equipment characterized by the percentage of area covered with an external additive **(ed) by this toner particle outside to surface area of this toner 1 particle being 15% or more.

[Claim 2] Image formation equipment according to claim 1 characterized by installing these image formation units successively in accordance with an endless-like middle imprint object.

[Claim 3] Image formation equipment according to claim 1 or 2 with which shape factor SF-1 of this globular form toner is characterized by ranges of 100-140, and SF-2 being 100-120.

[Claim 4] This globular form toner particle is image formation equipment according to claim 1 to 3 characterized by being manufactured by polymerization method.

[Claim 5] Image formation equipment according to claim 1 with which a rate of area covered with an external additive **(ed) by this toner particle outside to surface area of this toner particle is characterized by being 50% or less 15% or more.

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[Detailed Description of the Invention]

[0001]

[Industrial Application] This invention relates to the image formation equipment which develops with a developer the electrostatic latent image formed in image support corresponding to the recorded image, and records it on a form etc.

[0002]

[Description of the Prior Art] Image formation equipment as shown in drawing 2 while the requests to the further improvement in the speed and high-definition-izing mount is devised with the spread of digital color copying machines. This image formation equipment is digital color picture formation equipment of the electrophotography method which prepares the image formation section (image formation unit) for every developer of four colors respectively, forms the visible image for every color in the image formation process later mentioned to the photoconductor drum as image support in each image formation section, carries out a sequential imprint at the imprint material to which these visible images are supplied from the outside, carries out package fixing and obtains a color picture. The greatest advantage of this method is being able to accelerate.

[0003] This color picture formation equipment is equipped with the four image formation sections, the 1st, the 2nd, the 3rd, and the 4th, PM, PC, PY, and PK in the main part of equipment, and the feed section 7 is arranged in the right-hand side of that end, i.e., drawing 2, and the fixing machine 8 is arranged in that opposite side, i.e., the left-hand side of drawing 2, respectively. Moreover, in an endless-like imprint material conveyance means to convey imprint material, and this conventional example, the conveyance belt 10 is ****(ed) among two or more rollers in a well-known mode by the path bottom to said fixing assembly 8 from said feed section 7 within the main part of a printer.

[0004] This conveyance belt 10 is driven in the direction shown by the illustration arrow head, supports the imprint material fed through said feed section, and carries out sequential conveyance to each image formation sections PM, PC, PY, and PK mentioned above.

[0005] Each image formation sections PM, PC, PY, and PK have the same configuration substantially. The photoconductor drums 1M, 1C, 1Y, and 1K which are the image support by which a rotation drive is carried out are included in the direction of an illustration arrow head like usual. Around each photoconductor drum A photoconductor drum The image aligners 3M, 3C, and 3Y which form an electrostatic latent image on the primary electrification machines 2M, 2C, and 2Y which carry out uniform electrification, and a 2K; photoconductor drum, and the development counters 4M, 4C, 4Y, and 4K which develop the electrostatic latent image formed on the 3K; photoconductor drum; the developed visible image The corona-electrical-charging machines 6M, 6C, 6Y, and 6K imprinted to imprint material; sequential arrangement of the drum cleaners 5M, 5C, and 5Y and 5K** which remove the toner which remains on a photoconductor drum is carried out in the drum hand of cut.

[0006] The toner of a cyanogen color is held in development counter 4M, and the toner to development counter 4K with the black toner of a yellow color is held for the toner of a Magenta color in development counter 4Y by development counter 4C, respectively. Said image aligners

3M, 3C, 3Y, and 3K It is the LED arm head which put the LED light emitting device in order in the direction of a bus-bar of a drum in this example. By image sensor like CCD for colors, it is decomposed into many pixels and read. Receive the input of the digital pixel signal over the image of each color changed into the digital signal, and a drum side is exposed corresponding to this signal among said primary electrification machines 2M, 2C, 2Y, and 2K and development counters 4M, 4C, 4Y, and 4K. The electrostatic latent image of a corresponding color is formed. The pixel signal corresponding to the black component image of a color picture in the pixel signal corresponding to the yellow component image of a color picture in the pixel signal corresponding to the cyanogen component image of a color picture in the pixel signal corresponding to the Magenta component image of a color picture in image aligner 3M is inputted into image aligner 3K at image aligner 3C at image aligner 3Y, respectively. Moreover, between the first image formation section PM and the feed section, opposite installation of the adsorption zone electrical machinery of the pair for adsorbing imprint material is carried out on both sides of the conveyance belt 10. On the other hand, the electrification machine for electric discharge is formed between the 4th image formation section PK and a fixing assembly 8, and in order to separate the imprint material by which the conveyance belt 10 is adsorbed, alternating voltage is impressed from a power supply (not shown).

[0007] In the color printer of the above-mentioned configuration, electrostatic adsorption is carried out and the imprint material to which paper was fed on the conveyance belt 10 from the sheet paper cassette 7 is conveyed with migration in the direction of an illustration arrow head of the conveyance belt 10. conveyance of imprint material — following — photoconductor drum 1M of the first image formation section PM — the toner image of a Magenta — the toner image of yellow is shared with photoconductor drum 1Y of the 3rd image formation section PY, a black toner image is shared with photoconductor drum 1K of the 4th image formation section PK by photoconductor drum 1C of the 2nd image formation section PC, respectively, and the toner image of cyanogen is developed according to an electrostatic latent image.

[0008] A development production process is explained here. How (1 component non-contact development) to coat the development method with a blade etc. on a sleeve about a nonmagnetic toner, coat and convey a magnetic toner with magnetic force, and develop in the state of non-contact to a photoconductor drum generally, How (1 component contact development) to develop the toner coated as mentioned above in the state of contact to a photoconductor drum, It is divided roughly into four kinds of the method (2 component contact development) of conveying with magnetic force, using as a developer what mixed the magnetic carrier to the toner particle, and developing in the state of contact to a photoconductor drum, and the method (2 component non-contact development) of changing the above-mentioned two component developer into a non-contact condition, and developing it. From the field of high-definition-izing of an image, or high stability, many 2 component contact developing-negatives methods are used.

[0009] Drawing 3 is the schematic diagram of the developer 4 for 2 component MAG brush development in this conventional example. The regulation blade arranged in order that the magnet roller by which 16 had been placed in a fixed position by the development sleeve among drawing, and 17 has been placed in a fixed position in a development sleeve, and 18 and 19 may carry out a developer at a stirring screw and 20 may carry out thin layer formation on the development sleeve surface, and 21 are development containers. The development production process which develops said electrostatic latent image by the 2 component MAG brush method using the above-mentioned developer, and the circulatory system of a developer are explained below here.

[0010] First, in S2 pole → N1 pole and the process conveyed, the developer pumped up with rotation of the development sleeve 16 on the N3 pole is regulated by the regulation blade 20 perpendicularly arranged to the development sleeve 16, and thin layer formation is carried out on the development sleeve 16. If the developer by which thin layer formation was carried out here is conveyed on the development main lobe S1 pole, a chain-like cluster will be formed of magnetic force. Said electrostatic latent image is developed with the developer formed in spicate [this], and the developer on the development sleeve 16 is returned in the development container 21 by

the repulsion magnetic field of N3 pole and N2 pole after that.

[0011] Direct-current bias and AC bias are impressed to the development sleeve 16 from a power supply (not shown). If AC bias is generally impressed in the 2 component developing-negatives method, although the increase of development effectiveness and an image become high definition, they will also produce risk of saying that it becomes easy to generate a fogging conversely.

[0012] Thus, the toner image developed on the photoconductor drum migration of the conveyance belt 10 — imprint material — the 1-, while passing the lower part which are the photoconductor drums 1M-1K of 4th image formation section PM-PK one by one and being conveyed in the direction of the fixing section It imprints in piles one by one on imprint material with the imprint electrification vessels 6M, 6C, 6Y, and 6K of each image formation section, and a color picture is compounded. After imprint material passes the 4th image formation section PM, it is discharged with the electrification vessel for electric discharge with which alternating voltage was impressed, and is separated from the conveyance belt 10. The imprint material separated from the conveyance belt 10 is discharged from an imprint material exhaust port to a tray 9, after being fixed to the image imprinted by the fixing assembly 8.

[0013] On the other hand, the transfer residual toner has adhered to the field of the photoconductor drum after a toner image imprint, and since it will become image dirt and will appear at the time of next image formation if this is in the following imprint production process, a transfer residual toner is discharged from drum lifting with the drum cleaner 5, and is sent to the waste toner box put side by side. In this conventional example, the method of contacting an elastic blade to a photoconductor drum and failing to scratch a toner is used.

[0014] However, considering an environmental side and the troublesomeness of a maintenance, it is not not much desirable that a waste toner comes out. Moreover, by one side, the demand of the miniaturization to OA equipment, such as a copying machine, from a space-saving point is increasing.

[0015] There is development coincidence cleaning as one of the methods of solving these problems at once. The example using this method is shown in drawing 4. This is the method of fogging the transfer residual toner of the non-image section in the development production process of next image formation, and collecting in a development container with picking potential in the reversal development process of making the exposure section developing a toner. Since it is again mixed with a carrier and the collected toner is used for image formation, taking out a waste toner is lost. Since a drum cleaner becomes unnecessary at coincidence, a miniaturization becomes possible. Especially in the image formation equipment which has two or more image formation units of the same configuration like especially this conventional example, it is clear that it is effective in a miniaturization.

[0016] This process is briefly explained using drawing 5. This drawing expresses typically the potential of drum lifting after (1) imprint, (2) electrifications, (3) exposure, and (4) development, and arrangement of a toner. It is the potential difference [as opposed to / as opposed to / in VD / the potential of drum lifting / the development sleeve of the potential of the image section, and the potential of the non-image section in VC and Vb], respectively. Since a transfer residual toner is influenced of the corona discharge at the time of an imprint, the so-called reversal toner which polarity reversed is also contained [after (1):imprint]. However, a reversal toner is normalized at the same time electrification processing of the photoconductor drum is carried out [after (2):electrification]. It is covered with the toner which a new latent image was formed and has adhered to the non-image section [after (3):exposure], and it is recovered by the picking potential Vb in a development container [after (4):development]. However, when there are many transfer residual toners, at the time of electrification, electrification nonuniformity may arise, or it may be shaded and a latent image may be disturbed. For this reason, it is indispensable to use for development coincidence cleaning the globular form toner with the high recovery effectiveness at the time of development which is high imprint effectiveness. Since a globular form toner is charged in homogeneity with a contact opportunity with a carrier to electrostatic adhesion force committing this strongly at the time of contact to a drum since it is restricted to a height that a non-globular form toner has a carrier and a contact opportunity and the height is

locally charged in high density without the whole surface of 10,000 **, the electrostatic adhesion force at the time of contact to a drum is because it becomes weak to a non-globular form toner. Moreover, a globular form toner rolls compared with a non-globular form toner, and is also a cause with recovery effectiveness sufficient [that a sex is also high].

[0017]

[Problem(s) to be Solved by the Invention] When a cleaner loess method is used for the image formation equipment which installed two or more image formation units successively along with the conveyance belt, the problem of the color mixture by re-imprint occurs. Since these will be collected by the development counter of the color from which the toner of a different color already imprinted on imprint material adheres to drum lifting, and differs from on an imprint according to the adhesion force between a toner and a drum, and the repulsive force produced between imprint material in order that polarity may be reversed with an imprint electrification vessel at the time of the imprint after a two-color eye, they happens. It becomes difficult for this color mixture to advance for every image formation, and to reproduce an exact color tone.

[0018] This invention is made in view of the above situations, the color mixture by re-imprint is prevented, and it aims at offering the image formation equipment which can maintain an image without change of a color tone.

[0019]

[Means for Solving the Problem and its Function] It has a development means for this invention to form a latent image in homogeneity at image support by which electrification processing was carried out, and to develop this latent image and to form a toner image with a developer containing a globular form toner supported by developer support and a carrier. An image formation unit which serves also as a cleaning means to collect ** toner particles which remained to this image support after this development means imprints this globular form toner image to imprint material In image formation equipment which is installed successively along with a conveyance belt, conveys imprint material by this conveyance belt, is made to pass said image formation unit, and forms an image [two or more] It is related with image formation equipment characterized by the percentage of area covered with an external additive **(ed) by this toner particle outside being 15% or more to surface area of this toner 1 particle.

[0020] Moreover, this invention is replaced with a conveyance belt in the above-mentioned image formation equipment, and relates to image formation equipment with which the above-mentioned image formation units are installed successively in accordance with this middle imprint object using an endless-like middle imprint object.

[0021] Detailed explanation of this invention equipment is given in the following examples.

[0022]

[Example]

(Example 1) Since what has an image formation process [the fundamental configuration of the color picture formation equipment in the example 1 of this invention is the same as that of drawing 4 in the conventional example, and be / the same as that of the development coincidence cleaning in the conventional example / it] was used, the explanation about it is omitted here.

[0023] In order to solve the above and the trouble of color mixture, as a result of examining how to reduce a re-imprint, it turned out that it depends for the re-imprint on the rate of the area covered by the external additive which the toner surface to the surface area of a toner particle added to the toner, i.e., coverage, greatly. Although there was usually improvement in the fluid improvement in a developer, improvement in electrification grant nature, the stability of the amount of electrifications to an environmental variation, and the imprint nature by reduction of the adhesion force to a drum etc. as an effect of an external additive, when it became the range which the coverage of a toner mentions later, it turned out also to re-imprint prevention that it is very effective.

[0024] In this invention, that 100-140, and whose SF-2 shape factor SF-1 of a toner is 100-120 is used suitably, and that 100-130, and whose SF-2 SF-1 is 100-115 is good more preferably. In SF-1 which shows the shape factor used for this invention, and SF-2, the toner was sampled to 100-piece random using Hitachi FE-SEM (S-800), and the image information analyzed by having

introduced into the image-analysis equipment made from NIKORE (Luzex3) through the interface, and defined the value which might be computed from the bottom type as shape factor SF-1 and SF-2 in this invention.

[0025]

[Equation 1]

$$SF - 1 = \frac{(MXLNG)^2}{AREA} \times \frac{\pi}{4} \times 100$$

$$SF - 2 = \frac{(PERI)^2}{AREA} \times \frac{1}{4\pi} \times 100$$

(AREA: Toner projected area, MXLNG: absolutely maximum length, PERI: perimeter)

[0026] Shape factor SF-1 of a toner shows a globular form degree, and if larger than 140, it will become an indeterminate form from a globular form gradually. SF-2 show a concavo-convex degree, and if larger than 120, they will become remarkable [the irregularity of the surface area of a toner].

[0027] It is lowering the effect of the photo conductor live-part material to the toner surface as much as possible as an operation effect of a toner configuration, and suppressing generation of a reactant low molecular weight constituent in a toner. That is, as small the globular form of toner surface area as possible is desirable.

[0028] When a part or the whole of a toner uses the toner formed by the polymerization method, the effect of this invention can be heightened. Since the portion which starts especially as for the toner surface is made to exist as a pre toner (monomer constituent) particle in a dispersion medium about the toner formed by the polymerization method and a polymerization reaction generates a required portion, what was graduated considerably can be obtained about surface nature. If SF-1 exceeds 140 or SF-2 exceed 120, a fogging may increase or endurance may be inferior a little.

[0029] Furthermore, the core/shell structure of a toner can be given, and the toner used for the image formation equipment of this invention can be manufactured still more easily by using a toner which was formed of the polymerization in the shell portion. In this semantics, the toner which has a core/shell structure is preferably used for this invention. It cannot be overemphasized that blocking resistance can be given without an operation of a core/shell structure spoiling fixable [which was excellent in the toner].

[0030] The result of having evaluated the amount of re-imprints in the coverage and the optimal imprint current value when using a silica (SiO₂) with a mean particle diameter of 20nm as an external additive as the first embodiment of an example 1 using the globular form toner (SF-1 being 108 and SF-2 being 108) manufactured by the suspension-polymerization method is shown in a table 1. The thing excellent in the mold-release characteristic is used for the emergency with the surface layer which distributed the Teflon particle in the outermost layer at the photo conductor.

[0031] A degree type can express coverage in a toner almost near a globular form which is used for this invention.

[0032]

[Equation 2]

$$R = \frac{r_t \cdot d_t}{4 \cdot r_a \cdot d_a} \cdot A$$

[0033] For R, the coverage of the external additive on the surface of a toner and A are [the average radius (micrometer) of a toner, specific gravity (g/cm³), and r_a and d_a of outside **** (wt%), and r_t and d_t] the average radii (micrometer) and specific gravity (g/cm³) of an external additive(%) here, respectively. However, when an external additive forms an aggregate, r_a serves as an average radius of an aggregate.

[0034] A table 1 showed stopping generating a re-imprint, when the coverage of the external additive on the surface of a toner was 15% or more.

[0035] The result of having evaluated the amount of re-imprints in the coverage and the optimal

imprint current value at the time of using titanium oxide (TiO₂) with a mean particle diameter of 50nm as an external additive as the second embodiment of an example 1 is shown in a table 2. When the coverage of an external additive was 15% or more also in the second example, generating of a re-imprint was lost.

[0036] The above thing shows depending for the amount of re-imprints on the coverage to the quality of the material or not particle size but the toner surface of an external additive most greatly, when the globular form polymerization toner by the suspension-polymerization method is used. Although considering the endurance of a developer it is so advantageous that there is much outside **** in order to maintain the external additive effect and to obtain the stable rate of a re-imprint, evils, such as a fall of the amount of electrifications by the overexternal additive and toner scattering, also happen. When coverage exceeds 50% in the examination in this invention besides these, it is in the orientation for development nature to fall in the low concentration section, and, as for coverage, therefore, it is desirable that it is 50% or less. An external additive comes to adhere to a carrier so much for ** outside an excess, this adheres and accumulates this phenomenon in the photo conductor surface at the time of development, and in order that a mold-release characteristic may go up to the degree of pole, it happens.

[0037] Since the image formation process of this example has eliminated blade cleaning, superfluous outside ** which the affix on the surface of a photo conductor is not removed, and causes an affix must avoid. Therefore, as coverage of the external additive on the surface of a toner, it is desirable that it is 15% or more, and it is good more preferably that it is [15% or more] 50% or less.

[0038] Although the external additive was independently used in this example, respectively, it does not restrict to this, and although more than one may be used together, needless to say, coverage serves as the sum total of the coverage of each external additive in that case. Moreover, although hydrophobing processing of the surface was carried out as an external additive, the same effect is acquired, even if the configuration of equipment [as opposed to an environmental variation in the direction / in / considering stability / nearby good better this example] is an example, for example, an imprint electrification machine is not a corona-electrical-charging machine but a roller electrification machine.

[0039] In the image formation equipment which used the development coincidence cleaning process as mentioned above, and installed two or more image formation units successively along with the conveyance belt, by making coverage on the surface of a toner by the external additive into 15% or more, the re-imprint was able to be prevented and the output image of the exact color tone which does not have the fall of color reproduction nature in long-term use was able to be obtained.

[0040]

[A table 1]

被覆率 (%)	再 転 写
0	非常に多い
4.5	非常に多い
6.1	非常に多い
13	多い
15	なし
22	なし

[0041]

[A table 2]

被覆率 (%)	再 転 写
0	非常に多い
3.1	非常に多い
7.2	多い
11	多い
12	多い
15	なし
22	なし

[0042] (Example 2) Drawing 1 is the outline side elevation of the color picture formation equipment in which an example 2 is shown. In the example 1, the color picture was formed by superimposing a direct monochrome toner on imprint material by fixing imprint material electrostatic on the imprint material conveyance belt 10, and passing the image formation section one by one. On the other hand, in this example, the middle imprint object belt 11 which is an image supporter instead of the imprint material conveyance belt 10 of an example 1 was used. Since an equipment configuration will not have an example 1 and the changing place if a middle imprint object is removed, explanation is omitted here. However, as an imprint electrification machine, the roller electrification machine (inside of drawing, 6') is used.

[0043] The image formation process in this example is explained briefly. The toner image formed in each image formation unit forms a color picture in the middle imprint object belt 11 which is an image supporter by carrying out a sequential imprint, and carries out a package imprint on the imprint material which has had this conveyed. Since a transfer residual toner is as little ** on the middle imprint object 11 after an imprint, a cleaner 12 recovers this. Since the outline of image processes other than this is the same as an example 1, explanation is omitted here.

[0044] By using the middle imprint object belt which it could respond to various paper types as imprint material as an image formation process feature using a middle imprint object like this example, and also was set as proper resistance, since it becomes the imprint to the uniform quality of the material without resistance nonuniformity etc. unlike the imprint to imprint material like paper, prevention of high imprint effectiveness and a re-imprint is realizable. Therefore, color mixture is also further reduced rather than an example 1.

[0045] Here, as the above-mentioned middle imprint object belt, what carried out distributed mixing of a conductive carbon particle, the metal powder, etc. is used, for example as a material to polyurethane system resin, polyester system resin, polystyrene system resin, polyolefine system resin, poly-butadiene system resin, polyamide system resin, polyvinyl chloride system resin, polyethylene system resin, fluorine system resin, etc. In this example, the thing which made polyurethane system resin distribute a carbon particle was used.

[0046] As mentioned above, by using a middle imprint object in addition to making coverage by the external additive on the surface of a toner into 15 - 50%, the re-imprint was able to be prevented still more certainly, and the output image without change of the tint by color mixture was able to be continued and obtained.

[0047]

[Effect of the Invention] When the rate of the area covered with the external additive with which the image-formation unit which serves as a cleaning means collect the ** toner particles which remained to the above-mentioned latent-image support is **(ed) by this toner particle outside to the surface area of this toner particle in the image-formation equipment installed successively along with the transferred object considers as 15% or more according to this invention, the color mixture by re-imprint prevents and an image without change of a color tone could maintain.

[two or more]

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DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

[Brief Description of the Drawings]

[Drawing 1] It is the outline side elevation of the color picture formation equipment in which the example 2 of this invention is shown.

[Drawing 2] It is the outline side elevation of well-known color picture formation equipment.

[Drawing 3] It is an outline side elevation explaining a well-known development operation.

[Drawing 4] It is the outline side elevation of the color picture formation equipment of **** or an example 1 which takes a development coincidence cleaning method.

[Drawing 5] It is the mimetic diagram of the mode after the imprint which shows behavior of the image support surface potential in a development coincidence cleaning process, and a toner.

[Description of Notations]

1 Photoconductor Drum (Image Support)

2 Primary Electrification Machine

3 Image Aligner

4 Development Counter

5 Drum Cleaner

6 Corona-Electrical-Charging Machine

6' Roller electrification machine

7 Feed Section

8 Fixing Assembly

9 Tray

10 Conveyance Belt

11 Middle Imprint Object Belt

12 Cleaner

P Image formation section (image formation unit)

[Translation done.]

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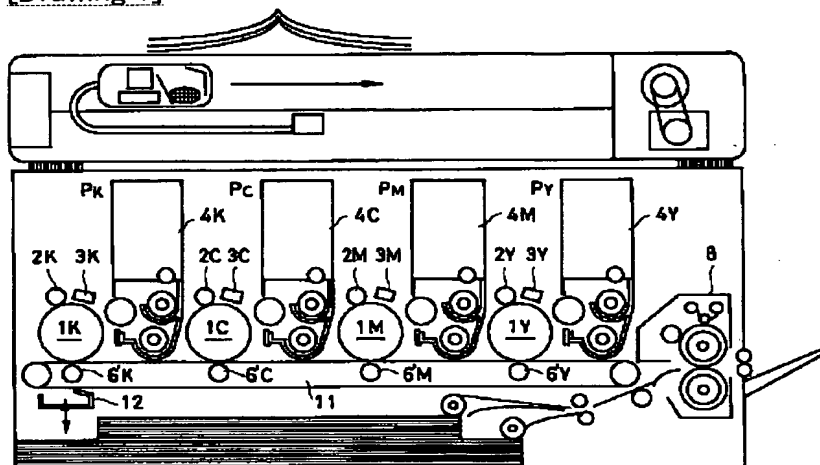
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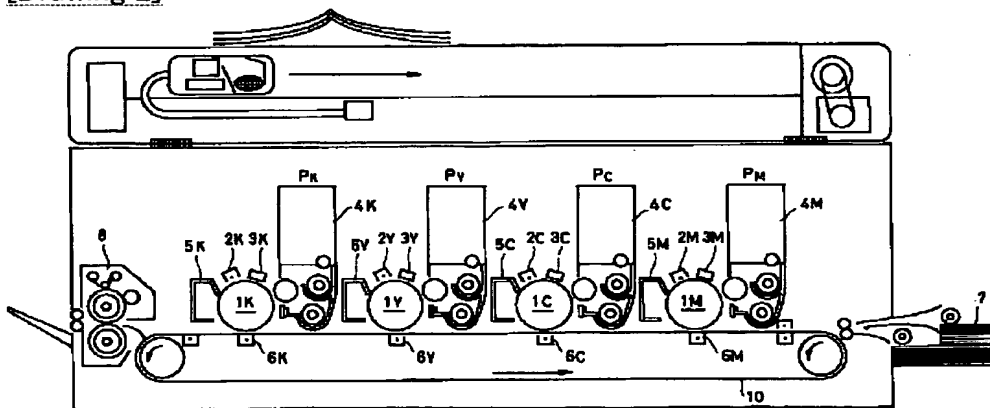
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DRAWINGS

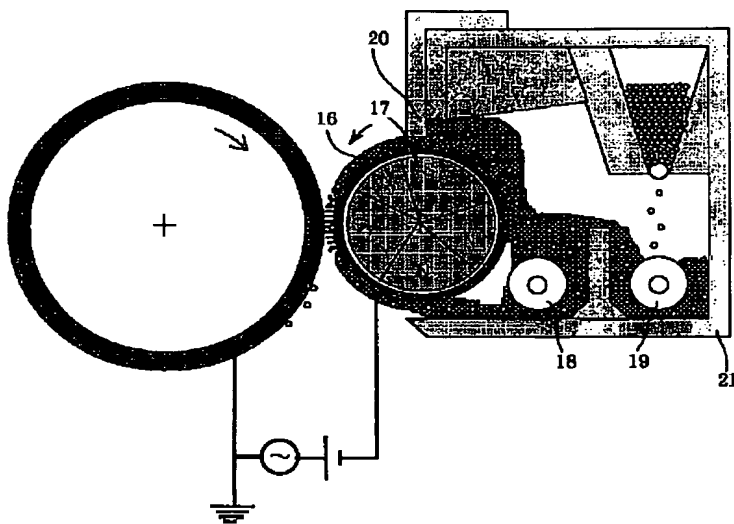
[Drawing 1]



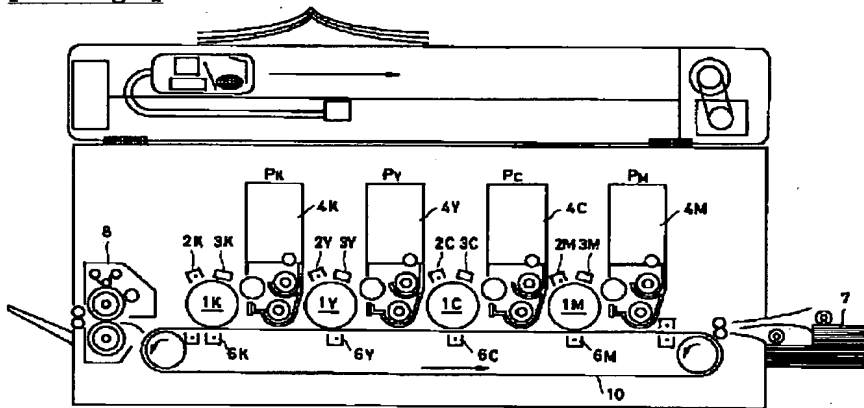
[Drawing 2]



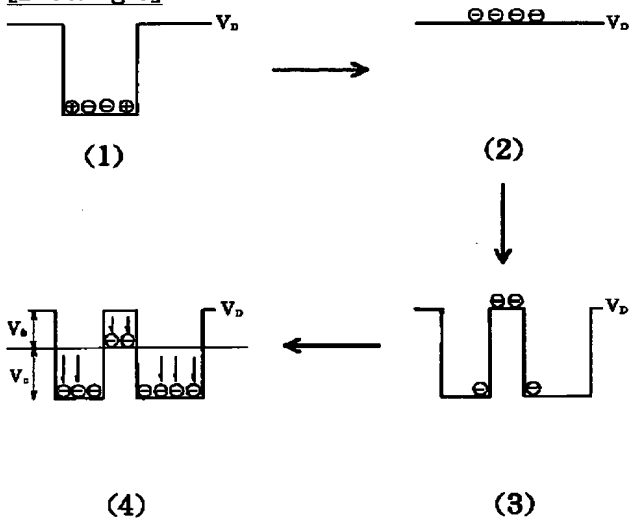
[Drawing 3]



[Drawing 4]



[Drawing 5]



[Translation done.]

静電荷像に応じて現像される。

【0008】ここで現像工程について説明する。一般的に現像方法は、非磁性トナーについてはプレート等スリーブ上にコーティングし、磁性トナーは磁気力によってコーティングして搬送し感光ドラムに対して非接触状態で現像する（一成分非接触現像）と、上記のようにしてコーティングしたトナーを感光ドラムに対して接触状態で現像する方法（二成分非接触現像）と、トナー粒子に対して磁性的キャリアを混合したものを現像剤として用いて磁気力によって搬送し感光ドラムに対して接触状態で現像する方法（二成分接触現像）と、上記の二成分現像剤を非接触状態で現像する方法（二成分非接触現像）の4種類に大別される。画像の高画質化や安定性の面から、二成分接触現像法が多く用いられている。

【0009】図3は本従来例における二成分磁気ブラシ現像用の現像装置4の概略図である。図中、16は現像スリーブ、17は現像スリーブ内に固定配置されたマグネットローラー、18、19は搬送スクリュー、20は現像剤を現像スリーブ表面に薄層形成するために配置された規制プレート、21は現像容器である。ここで前記規制プレート21は現像容器である。ここで前記静電荷像を上記の現像装置を用いて二成分磁気ブラシ法により顕像化する現像工程と現像剤の循環系について以下説明する。

【0010】まず、現像スリーブ16の回転に伴いN₃極で吸み上げられた現像剤は、S₂極→N₁極と搬送される過程において、現像スリーブ16に対して垂直に配置された規制プレート20によって規制され、現像スリーブ16上に薄層形成される。ここで薄層形成された現像剤が、現像主極S₁極に搬送されてくる磁気力によって現像剤が形成される。この過程に形成された現像剤によって前記静電荷像を現像し、その後N₃極、N₂極の反磁境界によって現像スリーブ16上の現像剤は、現像容器21内に戻される。

【0011】現像スリーブ16には電源（図示せず）から直流バイアス及び交流バイアスが印加される。一般に二成分現像法においては交流バイアスを印加するに現像効率が上がり、画像は高品位になるが、逆にかぶりが発生しやすくなるという危険も生じる。

【0012】このようにして感光ドラム上に現像されたトナー像は、搬送ベルト10の移動によって転写材が第1〜第4の画像形成部P₁〜P₄の感光ドラム1M〜1Kの下側に順次に通過して定着槽の方向へと搬送される間に、各画像形成部の転写帯電器6M、6C、6Y及び6Kにより転写材上に順次重ねて転写されてカラー画像が合成される。転写材は第4の画像形成部P₄を通過した後、交流電圧が印加された除電用帯電器14によって除電され、搬送ベルト10から分離される。搬送ベルト10から分離された転写材は定着器8で転写された画像が定着された後、転写材排出口からトレイ9へと排出される。

【0013】一方、トナー像転写後の感光ドラムの面には転写残トナーが付着しており、これが次の転写工程にはいると次の回の画像形成時に画像汚れとなって現われるため、転写残トナーはドラムクリーナー5によってドラム上から除電され、併せられた残トナーボックスに送られる。本従来例では磁性プレートで感光ドラムに接触させトナーを掻き落とす方法を用いている。

【0014】しかし残トナーが出てしまうことは顕微鏡面や、メンテナンスの煩わしさを考えるとあまり好ましくないものではない。また一方で、省スペースの点から複写機などのOAA機器への小型化の要求が高まっている。

【0015】これらの問題を一度に解決する方法の一つとして現像同時クリーニングを用いた。この方式を用いた例を図4に示す。これは露光部にトナーを現像させる反転像プロセスにおいて、非画像部の転写残トナーを次の画像形成の現像工程において、かぶり取り電位によって現像容器内に回収する方法である。回収されたトナーは再びキャリアと混合され、画像形成に用いられるので残トナーを出すことはなくなる。同時にドラムクリーナーが必要となるため小型化が可能となる。とくに本従来例のように同じ構成の画像形成ユニットを複数持つ画像形成装置において、小型化にとくに有効であることは明らかである。

【0016】このプロセスについて図5を用いて簡単に説明する。この図は（1）転写後、（2）帯電後、（3）露光後、（4）現像後のドラム上の電位とトナーの配置を模式的に表わしたものである。V₀はドラム上の電位、V₁及びV₂はそれぞれ画像部の電位と非画像部の電位、V₃はトナーに対する電位差である。転写残トナーは転写時のコロナ放電の影響を受けるため極性が反転し、いわゆる反転トナーにも含まれている。【（1）：転写後】。しかし、感光ドラムが帯電処理されると同時に反転トナーは正電化される。【（2）：帯電後】。新たな帯電が形成され。【（3）：露光後】。非画像部に付着しているトナーはかぶり取り電位V₃によって現像容器内に回収される。【（4）：現像後】。但し、転写残トナーが多い場合は帯電時に帯電レラが生じたり、露光されて帯電が乱されたりする可能性がある。このため、現像同時クリーニングには帯電効率であり、かつ、現像時の回収効率の高い球形トナーを用いることが必須である。これは、非球形トナーはキャリアと接触機会があるのは突起部に限られ、その突起部が局所的に高密度で帯電するためにドラムとの接触時に静電的な付着力が強く働くのに対し、球形トナーは表面全体が均質なくキャリアとの接触機会を持ち均等に帯電するので、ドラムとの接触時の静電的な付着力は非球形トナーに対して弱くなるためである。また球形トナーは非球形トナーに比べ転がり性がいい。また回収効率のよい一因でもある。

【0017】

トを搬送ベルトに沿って列設した画像形成装置にクリーナレス方式を用いた場合、再転写による混色という問題が発生する。これは二色目以降の転写時に、転写材上にすでに転写されている異なる色のトナーがトナーとドラム間の摩擦力や、転写帯電器によって極性が反転したために転写材の間に生じる反転力によって、転写上からドラム上に付着し異なる色の現像剤に回収されてしまうために起こる。この混色は画像形成装置に進行し正確な色調を再現することは困難になってくる。

【0018】本発明は以上のような事態に鑑みてなされたものであり、再転写による混色を防止し、色調の変化のない画像を維持できる画像形成装置を提供することを目的とする。

【0019】

【課題を解決するための手段及び作用】本発明は、均一に帯電処理された像担持体に潜像を形成し、現像剤担持体に担持された球形トナーとキャリアを含有する現像剤によって該潜像を現像しトナー像を形成する現像手段を備え、該現像手段が該球形トナー像を転写材に転写したあとに該像担持体に残留した残トナー粒子を回収するクリーニング手段も兼ねる画像形成ユニットが、搬送ベルトに沿って複数個列設され、該搬送ベルトで転写材を搬送して前記画像形成ユニットを通して潜像を形成する画像形成装置において、該トナー粒子の表面積に対する面積割合が15%以上であることを特徴とする画像形成装置に関する。

【0020】また、本発明は上記画像形成装置における搬送ベルトに代え、無端状の中間転写体を用い、この中間転写体に沿って上記画像形成ユニットが列設されている画像形成装置に関する。

【0021】本発明装置の詳細な説明は以下の実施例において行う。

【0022】

【実施例】

（実施例1）本発明の実施例1におけるカラー画像形成装置の基本構成は従来例における図4と同様であり、画像形成プロセスは従来例における現像同時クリーニングと同様のものである。以下にその説明はここでは省略する。

【0023】前記、混色の問題を解決するために再転写を低減する方法を検討した結果、再転写はトナー粒子の表面積に対するトナー表面がトナーに接触した外添剤の面積割合に対するトナーの面積割合に大きく依存していることが分かった。外添剤の効果としては通常、現像剤の流動性の向上、帯電付与性の向上、摩擦変動に対する帯電の安定性、ドラムに対する付着力の低減による転写の向上等があるが、トナーの被覆率が低下する範囲になると再転写防止に対しても大変効果的であることが分かった。

【0024】本発明においては、トナーの形状係数SF-1が100〜140、SF-2が100〜120であるものが好適に用いられ、より好ましくは、SF-1が100〜130、SF-2が100〜115であるものが良い。本発明に用いられる形状係数を示すSF-1、SF-2とは、日立製作所製FES-SEM（S-800）を用いてトナーを100個無作為にサンプリングし、その画像情報はインターフェースを介してニコル社画像解析装置（Luzex3）に導入し解析を行い、下式より算出された値を本発明においては形状係数SF-1、SF-2と定義した。

【0025】

【数11】

$$SF-1 = \frac{(MXLNG)^2}{AREA} \times \frac{\pi}{4} \times 100$$

$$SF-2 = \frac{(PERI)^2}{AREA} \times \frac{1}{4\pi} \times 100$$

（AREA：トナー投影面積、MXLNG：絶対最大

長、PERI：周長）

【0026】トナーの形状係数SF-1は球形度合いを示し、140より大きいと球形から徐々に不定形となる。SF-2は凹凸度合いを示し、120より大きいとトナーの表面積の凹凸が顕著となる。

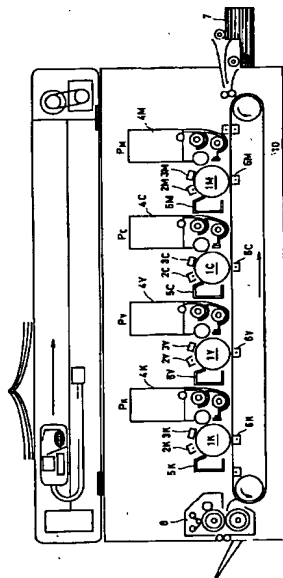
【0027】トナー形状の作用効果としては、できるだけトナー表面に対する感電体帯電部材の影響を低め、トナー中に反磁性低分子量成分の生成を抑えることである。すなわち、トナー表面積のなるべく小さい球形が好ましい。

【0028】トナーの一部又は全体が重合により形成されたトナーを用いることにより本発明の効果を高めることができる。特に、トナー表面のかかる部分を重合により形成されたトナーについては、分散媒中にプレートナー（モノマー組成物）粒子として存在させる必要部分重合反応により生成するため、表面性については、かなり平滑化されたものを得ることができ、SF-1が140を超えたり、SF-2が120を超えたり、かぶりが増えたり、耐久性が若干劣る場合がある。

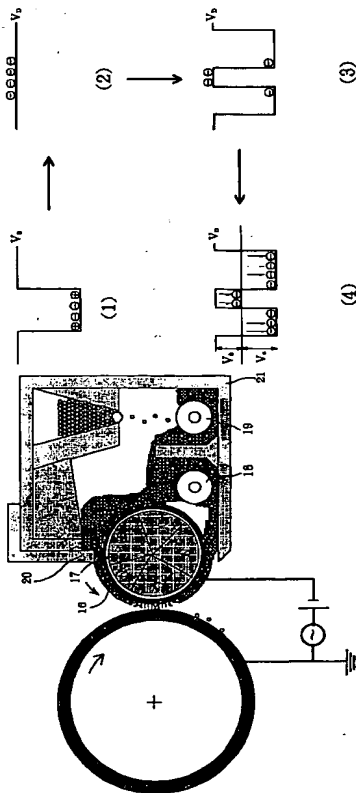
【0029】さらには、トナーのコア/シェル構造をもたせ、シェル部分を重合により形成されたようなトナーを用いることで、本発明の画像形成装置に用いられるトナーをさらに容易に製造することができる。この意味で、本発明には、コア/シェル構造を有するトナーが好ましく用いられる。コア/シェル構造の作用は、トナーの優れた定着性を損なうことなく耐ブロッキング性を付与できることには言までもない。

【0030】実施例1の第一実施態様として、熱融重合法によって製造した球形トナー（SF-1が108、SF-2が108）を用い、外添剤として平均粒径20nmのシリカ（SiO₂）を用いたときの、被覆率と最薄

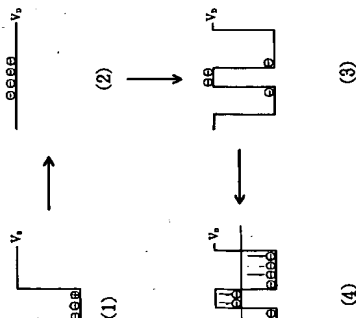
【図2】



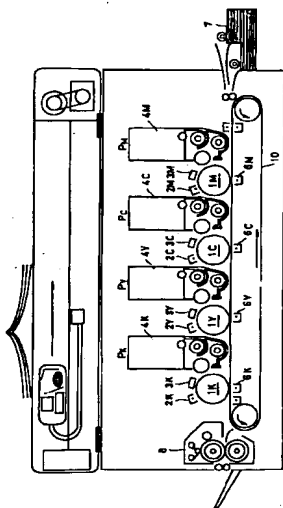
【図3】



【図5】



【図4】



【手続補正書】

【提出日】平成6年12月1日

【手続補正1】

【補正対象書類名】明細書

【補正対象項目名】発明の名称

【補正方法】変更

【補正内容】

【発明の名称】
画像形成装置

フロントページの続き

(72)発明者 伊藤 政宏

東京都大田区下丸子3丁目30番2号 キヤ
ノン株式会社内